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DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

Vol. VIII NO. 25 December 4th 1959 Price: 15 Pf, 5c., 3d.

"BIGGEST-EVER TRADE PACT"

The Soviet Union and Democratic Germany signed an agreement described as the "biggest trade treaty in world history" in Moscow on November 21st. The agreement, covering the years 1960 till 1965, foresees trade exchanges worth 50,000 million rubles (about £4,500 million at the official rate).

Under the giant treaty, the Soviet Union will supply the German Democratic Republic in the next six years with more than 32 million tons of coal, 12 million tons of iron ore, 15 million tons of rolled steel, pig iron and tubing, large quantities of aluminium, copper, lead and zinc, more than half a million tons of cotton and huge amounts of lumber.

Other Soviet exports will include grain, meat, butter, vegetable oils as well as refrigerators, washing machines and 34,000 cars. The Soviet Union will also send heavy construction and transport machinery and oil-boring equipment.

Democratic Germany will supply the Soviet Union with refrigerator trains and waggons, passenger ships, freighters and fishing vessels, equipment for cement plants and other factories and a large variety of chemicals and assorted consumer goods.

The actual trade exchange between the two countries is likely to be well above the giant 50,000 million rubles now foreseen, since experience has shown that such plans are revised upwards by 10-15% every year to keep pace with new economic developments.

Democratic Germany has been the Soviet Union's largest trade partner for several years; 47% of Soviet machinery imports now come from the GDR and the new trade treaty will supply even more machinery, chemicals and other products necessary for the rapid economic progress there.

The imports from the Soviet Union foreseen in the new trade agreement are indispensable to the Seven Year Plan in the GDR. They include 95% of all petroleum imports, to be delivered largely through the new pipeline now being constructed, which will be the basis for a new petrochemical industry. Almost 100% of both the iron ore and non-ferrous metals and 70% of the rolled steel needed during the next years will also come from the Soviet Union.

ALL TROOPS OUT CALL

Walter Ulbricht on Stateside TV

Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, appealed to President Eisenhower on November 13th to withdraw US troops from West Germany and establish normal diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic. He made the appeal in a television interview with Betty Adams of WBC, Boston, Mass.

Here are some of the questions and answers during the interview, which was transmitted in late November by TV stations in Boston, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and San Francisco.

Question: What is your opinion concerning the value of a summit conference?

Answer: The people of the German Democratic Republic attach great importance to a summit conference. Both the people of the German Democratic Republic and the people in Western Germany who want peace hope that now, fourteen years after World War II, a summit conference will finally be able to agree on a peace treaty for Germany.

As I understand his words, President Eisenhower also thinks it necessary to close the books on World War II. For Germany, that would mean ending the cold war, which is being used by West German politicians in the hopes of canceling out German imperialism's defeat and preparing a new war with policies of revenge and calls for frontier revisions.

We should like to ask President Eisenhower if the time has not yet come, fourteen years after the war, to withdraw foreign troops from Germany under the provisions of a peace treaty. It is both abnormal and contradictory to the United Nations Charter that there are still foreign troops in our land and that relations between our countries are still largely determined by the results of the war. Would it not be more in accord with the traditions of international law if the military missions of the western

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powers were replaced by diplomatic missions? We have all the more right to ask this question because the Potsdam Agreements of the three major powers have been carried out in the German Democratic Republic, because there is neither atomic rearmament nor military conscription here, and because no one here demands revenge or border revision.

Question: What do you consider the best settlement of the Berlin question? Should Berlin be a "Free City"?

Answer: When you speak of Berlin, you obviously mean West Berlin. We agree with the Soviet proposal that it would be practical to turn West Berlin into a demilitarised Free City. West Berlin is situated in the middle of the German Democratic Republic, but it is ruled by an Occupation Statute and is occupied by American, British and French troops. There are espionage agencies, propaganda centres and subversive groups in West Berlin which are used to disrupt the peaceful socialist construction in the German Democratic Republic. The most important step towards ending the cold war would be to eliminate these centres of disruption from West Berlin.

The fact that demands for a struggle to reconquer eastern territories, for wiping out the Oder-Neisse frontier and for other border changes are proclaimed from West Berlin, which means right in the middle of the German Democratic Republic, is clearly a great menace to peace. These revanchist politicians are encouraged by the presence of foreign troops. That is why we request you to help prevent any further attempts in West Berlin to endanger the peace — to cancel the Occupation Statute and gradually to withdraw western troops.

Question: Many people in the U.S.A. consider that East Germany has no autonomy but is run by the Soviet Union. Is that correct?

Answer: That is not correct. The German Democratic Republic is a sovereign state which has been in existence for ten years and which is governed by a People's Chamber and Government elected by its people. We should welcome better and less biased information for the citizens of the U.S.A. about the German Democratic Republic.

Mr Herter, the US Secretary of State, was able to see for himself in Geneva how the GDR presented not only the standpoint of the sovereign German Democratic Republic, but also that of peace-loving people in West Germany as well. Let any American statesman try to show us some decision of the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic or some action of her government which did not correspond with our country's sovereignty. No one has as yet even ventured to attempt to prove anything of this sort ...

Question: If Communism is best for your country, how is it, as we are told in the U.S.A., that 2000 East Germans leave your country every week.

Answer: I shall tell you exactly how things stand in this regard. Your figure might perhaps be correct. But, on the other hand, 31,400 people came to the GDR from West Germany during the first half of this year. Originally this figure was even higher, but after checking each case individually, we sent some of the people back again.

You should not only look at one side of the picture. In the past, some people did not understand the changes which were necessary in turning from capitalism to socialism. Some of these people went to the west. But this year a large number of people began to migrate in the other direction; the amount coming from the west to us is getting larger all the time. Over the first week-end of November, for example, 571 West German citizens came to settle in the German Democratic Republic. The number of West Germans who have come to settle and to work here in the GDR has indeed increased greatly this year. An especially large number of young people have come. Many miners who lost their jobs in West Germany found new jobs in the German Democratic Republic. The difference is, however, that the West German government recruits people illegally to leave the GDR, whereas we do not engage in such activities in West Germany. But the attempt to weaken the German Democratic Republic by enticing her citizens away has failed.

Scientists Plan for 1975

Scientists from Democratic Germany discussed plans for as far ahead as 1975 at a large-scale conference in Leipzig on November 26th and 27th. Among the 2200 participants were also representatives from universities, government planning bodies and factories.

Scientists working in the fields of applied science should concentrate their efforts on key problems posed by the Seven Year Plan (1959—1965), Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht stressed in his key-note address; this was necessary in order to increase productivity and reach the highest level in science and technology.

Other scientists should dig deeper into the spheres of theoretical science so as to provide a basis for continuous development, Mr Ulbricht said. They must not only confine themselves to applied science for current needs, but must make plans now for the Ten Year Plan period 1965-1975.

Professor Peter Adolf Thiessen, Chairman of the Research Council of the German Democratic Republic which co-sponsored the conference, appealed in his speech for close cooperation between scientists engaged in research and engineers or technicians who are faced with the daily problems of production.

The importance of adequately training a new generation of scientists was also stressed by many speakers, including Walter Ulbricht, who said, "We old-timers worked out the Seven Year Plan together with the youngsters. It will last till 1965 ... We must also plan the main outlines of a Ten Year Plan to last till 1975 together with young researchers... Putting it into action will then be done by the youngsters alone; that is why we must train people now who will be able to fulfil such grandiose tasks."

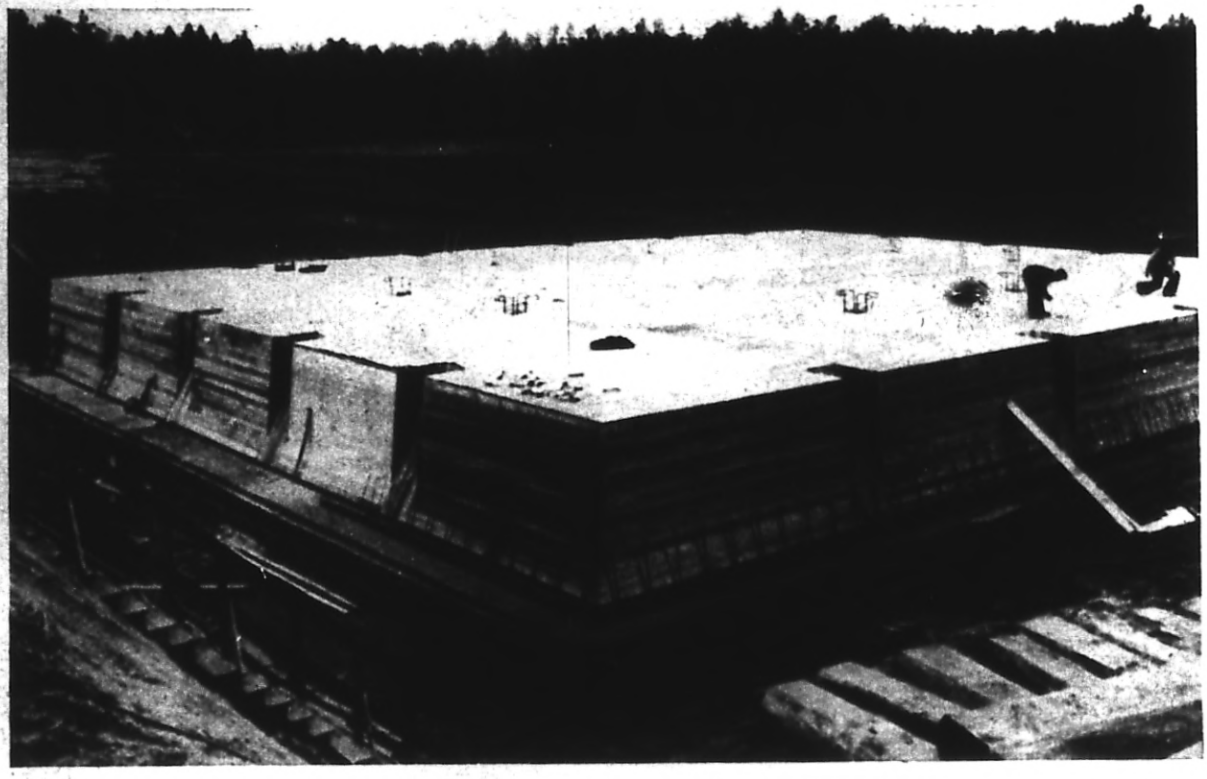
East-West German Trade Grows

Trade representatives from both German states signed a commodity exchange agreement for 1960 amounting to 2,300 million accounting units (equivalent to marks). The agreement, concluded in East Berlin on November 24th, shows a substantial increase over last year's trade accord, which provided for 2,000 million accounting units.

The main items to be exchanged are lignite coal and diesel fuel from the GDR in return for West German iron, steel and hard coal from the Ruhr. An increasing number of other commodities, including many consumer goods, will also be traded in both directions in 1960.

Proposals by the German Democratic Republic to raise the exchange ceiling to 3,000 million units for 1960 were rejected by the West German representatives, although the latter agreed that "there were definite long-term possibilities for expanding interzonal trade".

NUCLEAR POWER NEAR BERLIN



The heavy foundations of Germany's first nuclear power station, now under construction near Rheinsberg, north of Berlin. The power station, scheduled for completion in 1963, will have an output of 70 megawatts, and the output may later be doubled.

Main task of the new power station will be to win experience in this new method of power production. The reactor will be of the enriched uranium 235 type, using water under high-pressure as the brake.

The nuclear power station has been sited in an uninhabited forest area, and nobody will be allowed to live within a two-mile radius to avoid any possibility of radiation damage.

The new power-station will give the German Democratic Republic a clear lead over West Germany in the peaceful use of nuclear energy; the first nuclear reactor in Germany began operations at Rossendorf, near Dresden, on December 14th 1957.

Cubans Welcome GDR Trade Unionist

A fraternal delegate from the Free German Trade Union Federation, whose visit to Cuba was the first by a trade unionist from Democratic Germany, spoke to the tenth National Labour Congress of the Confederation of Cuban Workers in Havana in late November.

The visitor, Heinz Meier, who is President of the Union of Printers and Paperworkers, brought greetings to the congress from the trade unionists of Democratic Germany and wished the Cubans all possible success in their struggle for full independence and social progress.

He also invited the Confederation of Cuban Workers to send a trade union delegation to visit the German Democratic Republic and expressed the hope that Cuban ships might soon load and unload freights at the new Rostock harbour in Democratic Germany.

GDR Scientists in the Antarctic

The first three scientists from Democratic Germany to visit the Antarctic left from Leningrad on November 21st with the Soviet ship "Kooperatsia". The three scientists, meteorologists and hydrologists, who will spend the next 17 months at the Mirny station on the ice-bound continent, were invited to take part in the scientific expedition by the Polar Research Institute in Leningrad.

Czechoslovak – GDR Cooperation

Even closer cooperation in all political and economic fields between Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic was pledged by leaders of the two states in Berlin on November 26th.

A communique issued at the conclusion of a week-long visit to the GDR by a delegation from Czechoslovakia headed by President Antonin Novotny and Prime Minister Viliam Siroky foresaw a growing cooperation and division of labour between the two countries, particularly in the fields of industrial production and technical know-how.

The Case of The Murderous Minister (Summary)

(In the past few issues of GERMAN REPORT, details have been given of the sinister career of Professor Theodor Oberlaender, today Refugee Minister in the West German Government. To date, despite the evidence against him, the West German authorities have taken no steps to inspect the documentary evidence available in East Berlin and elsewhere. Below we summarise the evidence against Minister Oberlaender.)

1. Oberlaender's part in the Hitler putsch in Munich in 1923.

Evidence: Autobiographical questionnaires filled in by Oberlaender during the nazi period. Originals available in East Berlin.

Believe It or Not

"The (West German) Federal Government tolerates no dyed-in-the-wool Nazis in responsible positions."

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in an interview published in the "Sunday Times", London, November 15th

2. Oberlaender's meteoric career in the nazi period: Gau-amts-leiter of the Nazi Party in East Prussia, Provincial Head of the Association of Germans Abroad, Federal Fuehrer of the Federation of Germans in the East, Captain of the Storm Troops.

Evidence: Oberlaender's own questionnaire, as above.

3. Oberlaender's activity as propagandist for racial discrimination.

Evidence: Oberlaender's published writings from the nazi period.

4. Oberlaender's part in the organisation of nazi Fifth Columns in eastern Europe before the outbreak of war.

Evidence: Nazi files available in East Berlin, and official files available in Poland and the Soviet Union.

5. Oberlaender's activities as a key officer in the Wehrmacht Intelligence Service.

Evidence: Wehrmacht files available in East Berlin.

6. Oberlaender's participation in the nazi deportation and extermination campaign against the Poles.

Evidence: An article by Oberlaender in the nazi journal "Neues Bauerntum", and protocols of the "Institute for German Eastern Work" in Krakow.

7. Oberlaender's activity in recruiting and training Ukrainian fascists for the nazi attack on the Soviet Union.

Evidence: "Divisional History of the Brandenburg Regiment", and publications of the Eastern European Institute in Munich.

8. Oberlaender's activities as commander of the "Nightingale Battalion", a Ukrainian fascist unit of the Wehrmacht, which staged big pogroms in Lvov at the beginning of July 1941.

Evidence: Sworn statements by over 30 eye-witnesses, documents presented at Nuremberg trials.

9. Oberlaender's activities as commander of the "Bergmann" unit, raised from Caucasian war prisoners, and used for "pacification raids" in the occupied Soviet Union.

Evidence: Sworn statements by eye-witnesses.

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The weight of evidence against Oberlaender has become so great that even the Christian Democratic newspaper "Rheinischer Merkur" found it necessary to call on the West German cabinet to investigate the charges. "It is impossible any longer to ignore the Lvov case and the complicity of Dr Oberlaender", the newspaper stated.

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Standardisation is Trumps

Standardisation of machine parts, sizes and complicated production processes is an essential step in a socialist economy. This was the main theme of a big industrial exhibition which opened at Leipzig in Democratic Germany on November 15th.

The more than 2000 exhibits demonstrated how large-scale standardisation, only possible in a planned economy, could produce big savings in production.

Examples of the sort of saving to be achieved by proper standardisation were provided by a motor-cycle factory which showed a newly-designed heavy motor cycle. Instead of designing new parts throughout, the new model takes over 167 parts from the older lighter model, and only uses 40 newly designed parts. 60,000 man hours were saved and the stocks of spares at repair shops can also be kept smaller.

Another suggestion made at the exhibition is that foods such as rice, flour and sugar should be merchandised in packages of the same size, instead of the same weight, as at present. The same packaging machinery could then be built on a large scale instead of a whole range of machines for different sizes.

Other exhibits show the standardisation of plastic parts in machine-tools, the norming of almost all parts in loading and unloading equipment for deep-sea ships, and a new kind of twisting-frame for making thread which replaces four previous machines and saves the production of 464 cast-iron parts.

Brazilian Hero Arrives in Berlin

Luis Carlos Prestes, almost legendary Brazilian revolutionary, arrived in Berlin November 29th for a short visit to the GDR. Immediately after his arrival Carlos Prestes, who has been General Secretary of the Brazilian Communist Party since 1943, visited the site of the Ravensbrueck concentration camp where his wife, Olga Benario-Prestes, was murdered by the nazis.

Visit from Uruguay

A Uruguyan parliamentary delegation headed by Rodriguez Camusso, Chairman of the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies, visited Democratic Germany in mid-November. Earlier this year parliamentary delegations from Columbia and Peru made similar visits.

OUR OWN HANSARD

(During West German Chancellor Adenauer's visit to Britain, question time in the House of Commons was marked by a whole series of searching questions on West Germany. Since these questions and answers were almost entirely ignored by the British press, a full summary is given on this page.)

Question Time on November 18th

Mr Zilliacus asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in order to produce a favourable atmosphere for the Summit Conference, he will instruct the United Kingdom representatives at NATO to oppose the issue of nuclear weapons to German forces, to object to Germany being allowed to build bigger warships, and to express disapproval of US arms firms placing NATO contracts in Germany.

Mr Selwyn Lloyd: German forces are not given control of nuclear weapons. Any proposal of warships will have to be considered on its merits. There are no such things as NATO contracts. The answer to the question is therefore "No, Sir."

Mr Zilliacus: Is it not a fact that American firms are placing large contracts in Germany for the use of NATO forces, and is not the whole policy of increasing German military power, without demanding guarantees about German foreign policy, one fraught with considerable danger and calculated to make the success of a Summit Conference more difficult?

Mr Selwyn Lloyd: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman says. The policy of the re-arming of Germany was initiated from the other side of the House without any question of the control of German foreign policy. I think it has been the right policy, because we must have collective defence in Western Europe.

* * *

Mr Shinwell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government, as a member of the Western European Union, has now agreed to permit Western Germany to build submarines; and how many.

Mr Selwyn Lloyd: No request for amendment to the provision of the Revised Brussels Treaty about German manufacture of submarines has been made ... Under the terms of the Brussels Treaty, Western Germany was allowed to build submarines up to a tonnage of 350 tons.

(GERMAN REPORT comments: Mr Selwyn Lloyd was right for once. West Germany has not applied for amendment of the regulation on submarines: instead, it is soon commissioning a 2000 ton U-boat without requesting permission.)

* * *

Mr Warbey asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will make available ... the reports of the Armaments Control Agency of Western European Union on their inspection of West German arms production.

Mr Selwyn Lloyd: No, Sir. These reports are secret.

Mr Warbey: ... Many people were induced to accept German armament only by the argument that it would be subject to control ... Is it not therefore very important that we should know the extent to which the British Government are conniving at the gradual evasion on the restriction of German armaments and armament production?

Mr Selwyn Lloyd: ... Much of the information which the hon. Gentleman seeks is contained in the Annual Report of the WEU Council to the Assembly.

* * *

Mr Swingler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if, in his discussions with Chancellor Adenauer, he will draw attention to the appointment of former Nazis to judicial positions in Germany, and urge that action be taken to replace them.

Mr A. Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on what date he received the ... documents, photostats and charges against existing West German jurists that they collaborated with the Hitler regime and were responsible for crimes against humanity ...

Mr R. Allan: The documents referred to were received on 9th November. They have been referred to our Embassy in Bonn as this is a matter for the Federal German Government. I cannot disclose what subjects may be discussed during my right hon. Friend's (Mr Macmillan) confidential exchange of views with Dr Adenauer.

Mr Swingler: Will the Joint Under-Secretary ask his right hon. and learned Friend to use the opportunity of these conversations with Chancellor Adenauer to impress on him that one of the best contributions to improving Anglo-German relations would be to root out of power former German militarists and Nazis in Germany and to provide the long-promised reform, which has been repeatedly mentioned in this house and on the need for which evidence has been constantly submitted to the Foreign Office?

Mr Allan: ... We have not indicated that we would issue a report. What we have done is to refer to statements made by the Land (Provincial) Ministers of Justice in the Federal Republic who said they would investigate all these reports as they came up, and are continuing to do so. They will not give us reports on individual cases.

Question Time on November 19th

Mr Zilliacus asked the Prime Minister whether he will represent to Dr Adenauer that the elevation to the judiciary in the German Federal Republic of 1000 ex-Nazis, who, as judges in Hitler's special and military courts, were responsible for crimes against humanity, conflicts with the de-Nazification provisions of the Potsdam Treaty; and if he will request him to investigate the matter with a view to taking appropriate action.

Mr R. A. Butler: I have been asked to reply. No, Sir. The responsibility for de-Nazification and the judicial appointments in the Federal Republic is a matter for the German authorities, and we are confident that they will ensure that all allegations made in good faith will be adequately investigated.

Mr Zilliacus: Would the right hon. Gentleman ask for some statement from the German Government as to what is being done in this respect? Would he also draw attention to the increasing danger from ex-Nazi generals and SS colonels in the Bundeswehr (West German Army) and the police force in Western Germany?

Mr Butler: I will only remind the House that the responsibility has lain with the German Government in these matters since 1949. The Bonn Convention, which entered into force in May, 1955, stated that the Federal Government has full authority over its internal affairs. I agree that Her Majesty's Government have an interest in the matter, but at the moment I have nothing to add. We are noting the hon. Member's request.

(GERMAN REPORT comments: It was hard to get it out of the official government spokesman, but he finally admitted that the British Government had an interest in the question of renazification in West Germany. Just a minor note: the Labour M. P.s putting the questions were obviously referring to West Germany, the German Federal Republic. It would have been an aid to clarity if they had said so, instead in most cases of referring to "Germany", as if there were only one German state and one German Government.)

PRODUCTION TEAMS AT THE WORKBENCH

By Allen Mann

"Talk to Jochen Posselt", I was told. "He'll tell you all about the new joint production teams." My search for Herr Posselt led me through the streets, buildings and many corridors of the Berlin Lamp Works, the largest electric bulb factory in Democratic Germany.

I finally found the large hall where he worked, with its two long rows of machines at which women were seated, turning pieces of glass and metal into electric light bulbs, testing them and putting them in their little cartons.

Then Herr Posselt came over, a broad-backed man of about 200 lbs, with big, rather heavy hands and a pleasant, open face. He answered my questions haltingly at first, but soon became more relaxed and talkative as he grew accustomed to being interviewed.

The main idea of the joint production teams, he told me, was to solve all kinds of production problems — to work out new techniques, modernise old ones, to get rid of bottle-necks, improve quality, and to make the work lighter and easier. His particular team was a very small one consisting of only three men, but it was one of the first in the plant, and had been quite successful.

One of the final jobs in making bulbs is to solder two spots on the metal base which later fits into the lamp socket. In the Berlin factory, this had always been done by hand. Last year Jochen Posselt, who had come here in 1953 from Dresden when two plants were amalgamated, remembered that they had had some sort of automatic soldering system in Dresden years before. He soon found that there was a very different production process here, but he still felt that the job might be automated. So he got a friend of his who worked in the same department to help him work out a new automatic soldering method adapted to conditions here.

Both men are machinists. They soon found that they needed aid from a technician. They found an elderly engineer in another department who had also come from Dresden, and who promised to give them some advice on the best composition of the solder, on the needed fluids and other questions. But they hoped to

Lisa Merkel — who helps to make electric bulbs in the Berlin Lamp Works

accomplish most of the job alone and to get the credit themselves.

Then the factory heard about the joint production teams being set up at other plants. After talking over the matter, Jochen Posselt and his friend decided to invite the engineer to join them officially in such a team. He did, and the whole job was continued in a new, cooperative manner. The technician tested fluids and solder, corresponded with other factories, and visited the Leipzig Fair in order to find out methods used elsewhere. The two machinists set up the machinery, tried it out, got colleagues in other departments to make this or that part for them. The three came together constantly and compared notes — what needed to be done, what did not yet function properly, what improvements could they make? Herr Posselt and his friend did all this without falling behind in their regular jobs. They took advantage of any free minutes they had and often worked after their shift was over, on their own time.

They had begun to work together on the automatic solderer at the end of February; by the end of April they were ready for the first trial. After a week spent ironing out the last kinks, they succeeded. Instead of two people previously required to solder all the bulbs (and frequently holding up production), one person could now alone control and resolder the few spots which needed touching up (about 15 % of the total). On all the work lines involved, this meant that 24 workers could be saved for other jobs, where they were urgently needed, and that the soldering job was made much lighter and pleasanter.

The three men were awarded a bonus for their work, of course. It amounted to 900 marks; they agreed that the two machinists would each get 400 marks and the engineer 100, since he had not put in the same time, energy and initiative as they.

These joint production teams (called "Arbeitsgemeinschaften" in German) are distinct from the "socialist brigades" which are made up of people who work together at the bench in one work team. These brigades are devoted to improving day to day production in quantity and quality, in attending courses together and in going to the theatre together with their wives and husbands, that is, in cooperatively improving themselves and their work. The joint production teams, on the other hand, are aimed at solving certain definite problems and are thus more limited in scope, but not in their implications.

I later visited a member of another such work team, a young, rather handsome electrical engineer named Dieter Schuster. He came from Schwerin in the north of the Republic, he told me, and had also been in the plant since 1953.

His team, the very first to be organised in the plant, was quite different from the group started by Jochen Posselt. It consisted of nine people — four workers, one foreman and four electrical and chemical engineers. But here the engineers had obviously played the main part whereas the machinists, wire-drawers and the foreman had supported them in construction and testing.

If you look at an electric-light bulb carefully, you will see two little wires running through the glass core in the centre of the bulb. These two little wires must expand at the same rate as the glass in which they are embedded, and must be perfectly free of all dust and grease.

The production team developed a new method of cleaning these little wires — instead of "reducing" them by heat in an oven, a tiny amount of surface copper was removed in an electrolytic bath. This was not only easier and cheaper, and required less personnel, but seems thus far to have resulted in better quality wire — the surface of the wire is rough and therefore better adapted to its purpose. Television tube producers have found that the number of defective products have sunk to about 10% after using this new wire.

The team continued to work together to master other problems in wire production.

I asked Herr Schuster to define the difference between the joint production team method and previous methods. "Previously, we might have sent notes to each other", he told me, "asking for this or that spare part or bit of information and advice. With the new system, however, we get together, talk over all aspects of the problem, divide up the necessary jobs and then come together every once in a while to check up on how things are progressing. We also come together to try things out right here at the spot where the improvements are to be installed. The oldest man in our group, an engineer of about 60, helps along at the work bench just like all the rest of us. There is much more enthusiasm and we accomplish things quicker and easier, avoiding all red tape. In fact, our group has already helped save thousands of marks."

But I think that the new meaning of these teams lies somewhat deeper. For years, there had been a deep gulf between workers and intellectuals, which led in the factories to distrust of the technicians by the workers and to a supercilious attitude towards the workers on the part of the technical staff. Even the years working together in a nationally-owned factory could not completely root out these deep-seated feelings, which are to be found in most countries, but were especially sharp in Germany.

These joint production teams are a further method to overcome such feelings. The two groups I had investigated were the first two attempts along these lines. One was largely an attempt by workers, with the help of an engineer; the other was a joint effort by engineers, with the help of some workers — that is why they should be viewed as first attempts and not as perfect examples.

But in the meantime, new teams had been formed. A group of six workers, a foreman and an engineer worked out a way to automate another device for producing bulbs; another group — this time an engineer, a foreman and four machinists, brought up a machine which had lain unused in the cellar because of certain difficulties, overhauled it, changing certain features, and installed it. Two foremen and three workers in the fluorescent lamp department made some small but important improvements in the production of U-shaped bulbs there.

Up to the present, 42 teams have been formed — which means an average of one to every plant department. Some are formed for only one concrete purpose and then break up, others continue from one task to another. At present there are 388 members of such teams — 252 workers, 120 engineers, foreman and various kinds of technicians, and 16 members of management.

The workers are, of course, not afraid of losing their jobs when they help to automate various processes. There is a constant need for new workers in the plant — improvements mean no loss of work, but rather quicker, easier production and lighter work. For the far-sighted, that means more consumer goods for everyone and, after a while, cheaper prices. For the less far-sighted, there is also a bonus for every success, depending on its relative value.

I could see how the sharp caste lines of the past were disappearing. Dieter Schuster, the young engineer mentioned above, who was in charge of all technical processes in his department, had himself once been a precision mechanic. And Jochen Posselt, the bulky machinist, was planning to go to technical school next year and become a technician. "I know it seems a little silly for a man of 32 with three children to go to school again", he told me almost apologetically, "but I've decided to give it a try." There were many opportunities for all of the workers to get better jobs by going to special courses, and for a certain number to go to technical school, college or university.

But also in the everyday work, the old forced politeness and mistrust mixed with some apprehension on the part of the workers when talking with management, and the arrogance offered in return, has now given way in great measure to a friendlier, closer relationship, and the new production teams are destined to remove many of the last remnants of these old feelings.

A further step is also being taken. The whole factory, together with other factories in the electrical industry, is beginning to work with East Berlin's big Humboldt University in a sort of large-scale, city-wide joint production team. The Physics, Chemical and other scientific departments of the University will help the factories with various research problems and the students will have the opportunity to get practical experience in their fields, both at the work benches and in the factory laboratories. Even the legal students are involved — they sit in on sessions of the factory arbitration commissions, and the law school is offering legal help and advice when desired. The pedagogical department is helping at the factory evening schools and at the summer camps for the children of the employees, and so forth.

Thus, step by step, people are getting practice in working together towards achieving a better, more comfortable and happier life. The conflicts of the past are being forgotten, and the old socialist ideal of production for use and not for profit is being put into practice.

Free Sample Offer

A happy boy trying out the steering wheel of a tractor forms the cover subject for the latest issue of "GDR Review", lavishly-illustrated pocket magazine published in the German Democratic Republic.

Articles in this issue cover a great range of subjects from village schools to courtrooms.

The magazine is published monthly in English, German, French, Spanish, Swedish and Arabic.

A free trial copy, and details of how to subscribe, will be sent on application to:

GDR Review
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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

The title of the notebook this week should, I suppose, really be changed into "London Notebook", since I spent the week from November 15th to 21st in London. The main object of my visit was to take part in a brains' trust on the German Democratic Republic held in connection with the GDR exhibition in the Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, but I also had a chance to see something of Chancellor Adenauer's visit to London.

I had intended to write something about the West German Chancellor's visit, but it seems to be rather a waste of space: he arrived in a frigid atmosphere, had some rather cool talks with Mr Macmillan, and went home again. I may be wrong, but I feel that it was one of those visits which will not even leave a ripple on the sands of time.

So let me tell you something about the "Brains' Trust" in London. I hope that the people who fought their way through London's worst traffic jam for years to get to the meeting found it interesting and instructive. It certainly taught me something; how little is still known in England about the GDR, which is, after all, one of the most important states in Europe.

There were the questions which I had expected, and which have been dealt with time and again in GERMAN REPORT. Let me give you some of them in telegraph form:

Q. Are former nazis in posts of influence in the GDR?

A. No, with the exception of a very few who have shown by their deeds that they have made a clean break with the past.

Q. Are there old Wehrmacht generals in the GDR People's Army?

A. No, not one. There were a handful, now all retired, and all of them had taken a clear stand against Hitler while the war was still in progress.

Q. What about the refugees going to West Germany?

A. In any country there are people who don't like a socialist society, and they have been moving to West Germany. Today the number going west is steadily dropping, and the number coming from West Germany to the GDR is steadily rising.

Q. Is the church persecuted in the GDR?

A. No. The church goes about its church occasions in full freedom.

One question was very easily dealt with. This was the query from a lady in the audience as to why people were starving in the GDR. It was very satisfactorily dealt with by a gentleman in the audience who had himself lived in the GDR for a period, and who had shown his hostility to the GDR in a series of questions. He rose from his seat and assured the questioner that on this point, at least, he must support the platform by stating that there was no question of starvation: everybody in the GDR was eating very adequately.

But there was one question which showed me how easily misapprehensions can arise. A trade unionist stated that brother trade unionists who had visited the GDR had reported with horror that everybody in Democratic Germany had to register his or her residence with the police, and that special permits were needed before one moved into various large towns. There was general surprise at the meeting when we were able to assure the questioner that registration with the police was not something peculiar to Democratic Germany, but an administrative measure which has been in force in many European countries for umpteen years. It is the law of the land in West Germany and Austria, for instance, and probably in many other countries. People from many European countries moving to England are always astounded to discover that it is not necessary to register one's address with the police there. The question of special permission for moving into large cities is purely a matter of housing shortage; people wanting to move from West Germany into West Berlin have to get a similar permit.

The Brains' Trust lasted for about two and a half hours, and there were still queues of questioners waiting when it closed down. I was left with the impression that there are very many people in Britain who want to know more about Democratic Germany, and I think that the organisation of similar meetings in other centres would be a very good idea.

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So often in the past few years have I had a bone to pick with "The Guardian" of Manchester, that it is a pleasure today to say a word in its favour. On November 14th "The Guardian" published a leading article entitled "No Blue Pencils" dealing with an advertisement for the GDR Exhibition at which the Brains' Trust was held. This leader stated in part:

"An advertisement — announcing an East German exhibition in London — was booked for Monday's paper and will be appearing then. Its text, which has already appeared in some of the weeklies, is unobjectionable. However much one may detest a Communist regime, that is not in itself a valid reason to refuse a straightforward announcement. Had the advertisement been internationally provocative, critical of another country or regime, or obviously misleading it might well have been refused. But it is none of these things. The Foreign Office, it is true, informally let its feelings be known. Recently it mentioned to a number of newspapers that advertisements might be coming from East Germany and that they might be timed to coincide with Dr Adenauer's visit. The Foreign Office, however, knows better than to give newspapers direct advice. The point might be taken in Bonn. There a Federal spokesman, in reply to Reuter's correspondent, has said that his Government would appreciate it if British newspapers, "for reasons of loyalty", would abstain from publishing advertisements bearing the new East German emblem. That may be; but thank you, we prefer to make up our own minds."

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Veteran readers of this column may have a tendency to flinch when the name of Mr Terence Prittie, correspondent of "The Guardian" in Bonn, turns up once again, because I have a bash so often at his unreliable reporting on events in Democratic Germany. Today I have nothing to criticise, but just something to quote. Writing in the December number of the London magazine "Encounter" on the reasons for Chancellor Adenauer's dislike of Britain, he made an interesting disclosure:

"... doubt was nurtured in the (West German) Federal Cabinet by the confidential circulation last December of a British Foreign Office memorandum which set out reasons for a later recognition of the East German Republic."

The news that the British Foreign Office is facing facts is welcome: what would interest me is to know how this obviously secret British Foreign Office memorandum got into the hands of the West German cabinet. But of course, the West German intelligence service is run by General Reinhardt Gehlen, who was a very successful spy chief in Hitler's days.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III, Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in Germany by (204). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.